

**Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency**

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**FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATE**

**Quit Like a Champion: Here's How!**

**Coldwater, MI.** The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is encouraging tobacco users throughout the county to mark November 19th on their calendars. November 19th is the date for this year's **Great American Smokeout**, and it's the perfect day for tobacco users to take important steps towards a healthier life – one that can lead to reducing heart disease and cancer risk.

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in Michigan, killing more than 16,200 residents each year, yet many Michiganders still use tobacco. Between 2012 to 2014, 22% of Michigan adults and 24.5% of tri-county adults smoked cigarettes. Nearly 1 out of 8 Michigan and Hillsdale County youth smoke cigarettes (MI Phy Survey, 2013/14). In Branch County and St. Joseph Counties, the proportions were slightly better with 1 out of 9 and 1 out of 10 youth smoking, respectively. The good news is that there are more former smokers as there are current smokers living within the jurisdiction, which means that people can quit!

“The Great American Smokeout is an opportunity to remind tobacco users that they can be successful, that there are resources available to help them quit, and to support tobacco users in their efforts to quit,” stated Steve Todd, Health Officer for the tri-county health department. “Quitting tobacco use is the best thing you can do for your health. Within minutes to hours after quitting blood pressure, heart rate, and carbon monoxide levels decrease, and the long term benefits

continue over time, including improved lung function and decreased risk of cancer and heart disease.”

Quitting is easier than ever with the availability of the Michigan Tobacco Quitline. The Michigan Tobacco Quitline is an evidence-based service that continues to provide free telephone coaching for the uninsured, pregnant women, residents enrolled in Medicaid and Medicare, veterans, cancer patients, and American Indians, and free nicotine replacement therapy to those who qualify. The Quitline provides educational materials, text messaging, an online program, and referrals for all Michigan residents.

Research shows that while quitting is difficult for most tobacco users, people who use tobacco can increase their success in quitting with help. Quitters are most successful when using a combination of therapies, including resources such as nicotine replacement, counseling, self-help materials, and a strong support network of family and friends.

Providers can refer their patients and clients to the Quitline, and individual tobacco users can contact the Quitline directly at 1-800-784-8669, or enroll online at <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>. Additional information, including a fax referral form for providers, is available at the website or by contacting the health department’s tobacco education program. Staff and providers in all health care settings can refer patients and clients to the Michigan Tobacco Quitline.

For more information about the Michigan Tobacco Quitline or other cessation programs, visit our website at [bhsj.org](https://bhsj.org), click on the health education button at the top and follow the links to the tobacco reduction coalition. Or, visit the Michigan Quitline at <https://michigan.quitlogix.org/>. For more information about the Great American Smokeout visit the American Cancer Society's Web site at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org).

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